



# Raider Review



March 15, 2006

Vol. 1, Issue 4

Published in the interest of personnel assigned to the 1st Brigade Combat Team

## Inside the Raider Review



CABs awarded to 1STB troops, page 3



Iraqis taking charge of gate, page 6



Estonia, U.S. patrol sector, page 8



Paladin protecting forces, page 9



U.S. Navy photo by Photographer's Mate 1st Class Michael Larson

Pfc. Frederick Gregory, of 1st Bn., 66th AR, stands perimeter security after an improvised explosive device attack on his convoy as an Iraqi soldier from the Iraqi Army's 9th Mechanized Division scans the horizon. No one was injured during the attack.

## 9th IA, 1st BCT build on success of medical ops

By Maj. David Olson  
*1st BCT PAO*

Building on the success of a recent community health outreach program to further relieve tensions between Sunni and Shia factions, a group of Iraqi and

American Soldiers pushed aside the apprehension by conducting a second medial operation north of Baghdad, March 4.

The 1st Mechanized Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division and elements of 1st Battalion, 66th Armor Regiment and 4th Support Battalion from the 1st Bde. Combat Team, 4th Infantry

Div. conducted a second combined operation at the train station in Mushada to provide much needed medical care to the local Iraqi Sunni community, relieving tensions in the area while simultaneously building relationships toward a unified Iraq.

"We are cooperating  
(go to page 14, combined)

# Our mission, ensure terrorists failure streak keeps on rolling

By Col. James Pasquarette  
Commander, 1st BCT

**S**oldiers of the Raider Brigade: time for another update already. It seems like the time between editions of the Raider Review gets shorter all the time...

A lot has happened since I last commented on how we're doing here in Iraq. I believe the last installment was just after the bombing of the shrine in Samarra. The "civil war" that some thought may have begun was averted through a concerted effort of the Government of Iraq, the Iraqi Security Forces, Coalition Forces, the local provincial leaders and - - most importantly - the people. Civil war remains a possibility - but doesn't seem on the near horizon. There has



been a spike in sectarian violence, but it seems to be the work of small groups or individuals that were looking to act out - and used the Samarra incident to do so.

The Council of Representatives was seated on March 16. This ceremonial event was important in that it signified the starting of the process to select the key leaders in the forming government: the president, prime minister, the ministerial leaders will all be selected over the coming months in accordance with their recently ratified constitution. The clock started on March 16. Most of the Iraqis I talk to are watching this process closely and believe seating the government will stabilize the security situation.

The terrorist - having failed many times before in derailing elections and other key events on the road to democracy - now seem to be focusing their efforts on preventing the government from being seated. Our operations are focused on ensuring the terrorist's failure streak continues

- I am confident it will.

These two facts - the quick, positive reaction to the Samarra bombing and seating of the Council of Representatives - happened in large measure because of what you are doing here in the Raider Brigade. You facilitated the surge of 2nd Brigade, 9th IA Division forces into Baghdad in response to the sectarian violence. You increased patrols in areas deemed ripe for sectarian violence. You worked with the local Iraqi officials to provide essential services to the people. You continued to neutralize the terrorists in your respective areas - capturing and killing those that challenged us - while simultaneously protecting the force. You continued to train the Iraqi Army under trying conditions. You continued to guard Camp Taji, run the Division Holding Area Annex, provide indirect illumination fires, deliver logistical and administrative support, and everything else that makes a brigade go whether we're at Fort (go to page 4, Raiders)

The *Raider Review* is published bi-monthly in the interest of the servicemembers and their families of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division.

The *Raider Review* is an Army funded newsletter authorized for the members of the U.S. Army, under the provision of AR 360-1.

The views in The *Raider Review* are not necessarily the official views of, nor endorsed by the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or the Department of the Army.

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# Weapons cleaning a must in field

By Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Wells  
*Command Sergeant Major, 1st BCT*

Everyone has their little tricks to getting their weapon cleaned quickly and efficiently. This is what's in my kit.

First, I have the normal cleaning kit that includes a GP brush, cleaning rods, CLP, bore patches, bore brush and chamber brush.

#1: I keep a rag to wipe down the



large areas of the weapon, the buffer chamber, ammo and magazines.

#2: I cut clean rags into squares to clean the inside of the receivers.

They're heavier than the bore patch and last longer.

#3 and #4: I use two barber's brushes. One is left dry to wipe off dust and light dirt. The other I put a few drops of CLP on and lubricate the weapon. I keep it in a small plastic bag.

#5: Pipe cleaners are great in those hard to get areas like the bolt, trigger housing group and the bolt's carrier key.

#6: Q-tips are used to clean and lubricate the locking lugs, bolt and bolt carrier group.

#7: I get a small section of a clothes



hanger, smash one end and clean underneath the gas tube and the locking lugs with a small rag.

Finally, I can't say enough good things about CLP. It's been tested against everything else as the "next best thing" and has spanked the competition. I put CLP in a large spray bottle and lubricate the larger, crew served weapons.

## Six 1STB Soldiers pin-on combat badge

By Sgt. James Real  
*1st STB*

Six Soldiers from the 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division were awarded the Combat Action Badge Feb. 25 for coming into contact with the enemy while on patrol.

The CABs were awarded by 1st STB Commander, Lt. Col. John Cross. "I am extremely proud of all the Soldiers in the battalion, especially those that earned the Combat Action Badge."

The CAB is awarded to any Soldier who is personally present and actively engaging or being engaged by (go to page 8, CABs)



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. James Real

Pfc. Andrew Mann from Co. B, 1st STB, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div. is pinned the Combat Action Badge by Lt. John Cross, commander of the 1st STB at a CAB Ceremony held on Camp Taji, Iraq, Feb. 25.

# Raider Brigade Chaplain corner: *Despair wraps around your heart*

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By Chaplain (Maj.) Steve Feriante  
*1st BCT Chaplain*

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**T**here is an old Chinese tale about a woman whose only son died. In her grief, she went to the holy man and said, "What prayers, what magical incantations do you have to bring my son back to life?"

Instead of sending her away or reasoning with her, he said, "Fetch me a mustard seed from a home that has never known sorrow. We will use it to drive the sorrow out of your life." The woman went off at once in search of that magical mustard seed.

She came first to a splendid mansion, knocked at the door and said, "I am looking for a home that has never known sorrow. Is this such a place? It is very important to me."

They told her, "You've certainly come to the wrong place," and began to describe all the tragic things that recently had befallen them.

The woman said to herself, "Who is better able to help these poor, unfortunate people than I, who have had misfortune of my own?" She stayed to comfort them; then went on in search of a home that had never known sorrow. But wherever she turned, in huts and houses, she found one tale after another of sadness and misfortune. She became so involved in ministering to

other people's grief that ultimately she forgot about her quest for the magical mustard seed, never realizing that it had, in fact, driven sorrow out of her life.

Dr. Karl Menninger was asked what he would do if he found himself slipping into depression and contemplating suicide. Dr. Menninger replied, "I'd find someone in terrible trouble and help that person." The therapeutic value of reaching out and helping others is very great.

Saint Francis said, "It is in giving that we receive; it is in forgiving that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life."

Saint Paul said, "Bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ."

## Raiders making daily difference in Iraq

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*(continued from page 2)*

Hood or here in Iraq. I thank you for all you have done.

To the brigade's first line leaders... I need some help. CSM Wells and I have developed a Continuous Soldier Assessment tool for you. The intent is to provide you a means to help you determine when your Soldiers need some professional help to deal with the stress inherent with being deployed. I want you to take this tool and take a good, hard look at your Soldiers every day. It starts with determining the Soldier's pre-existing conditions that won't change.

After that, you'll need to continually assess your Soldiers as

things change in their lives: when they begin having trouble in a personal relationship; when they face UCMJ charges; when they lose a close personal friend, etc. I need leaders monitoring their Soldiers daily – and getting them the help they need when you assess they need it.

I continue to be impressed with our disciplined application of force while operating in this complex environment. In my eyes, every time we pull the trigger on a weapon system and it's not meant to kill someone displaying hostile act or hostile intent, we take a step backwards in what we are trying to do over here. A vast majority of the Iraqis we deal with are not a direct

threat.

Shooting at or near them may make them a threat to us. Stay disciplined. Apply common sense and check your buddy. Those who aren't disciplined should remain on the FOB.

Finally, as I've discussed before, I want us all to do what we can to keep complacency in check. This is a personal challenge we all face. Figure out how to change things up, give your procedures a fresh look, and don't assume that today will be like every other day.

Again, I couldn't be more proud of what you are doing here as part of the Raider Brigade. Keep up the fantastic work.

# Raider Brigade Safety STOPP: *Arriving troops profit from safety*

By Frank Partyka

*Brigade Combat Readiness Officer*

**A**s Soldiers arrive from Fort Hood, Texas, it is critical that they are briefed on the hazards they will face while here.

We have had electrical issues, several fires, personal injuries, vehicle accidents and the list goes on. We need to pass those lessons



learned off to the new guys or we are doomed to experience them again.

Have your unit safety officer provide you with lesson materials and videos pertaining to the many hazards we face.

Brief new Soldiers on those hazards and ensure they understand the implications of failing to adhere to established standards.

From a SIPR computer, you can access the many lesson materials and videos on the Raider Portal. Click on Special Staff, then Combat Readiness.

At a minimum, ensure all Soldiers view the Electrical Safety in Iraq

video and the many different M1114 Humvee rollover videos.

What you learn from the safety videos could save your or your Soldier's life!

**Stop**  
**Think**  
**Observe**  
**Plan**  
**Proceed with SAFETY**



**Standards and Discipline are the Best Control Measures!**

Raider Combat Readiness

## Poison Prevention Week kicks off

### Poison in Your Home

Each year thousands of children are poisoned by common household products such as insect sprays, cleaners, paints, bleach, perfumes and medicines.

The first step in preventing unintentional poisoning is to keep common household chemicals and medicines out of sight and out of reach of children. Store chemicals, cleaners and medicines in locked cabinets or on shelves. Special toddler locks are available for kitchen cabinets.



Reading and following the instructions on the product labels before use will protect you and your child.

Don't mix chemicals. Mixing chlorine bleach with

such chemicals as ammonia or acids such as vinegar or drain openers can create a toxic chlorine gas. Read all labels for precautions before use. Make sure you are using products in well-

ventilated areas and wearing the proper protective attire. Know what is toxic in your home and label it accordingly.

Always be sure your chemicals are stored in their original containers. Never put chemicals in food or drink containers. A chemical, such as anti-freeze, which is sweet to the taste and a lovely shade of blue, resembles some of the drinks on the shelves today.

Learn the proper names of plants around your home and mark (go to page 6, poison)—



# Iraqi soldiers man Taji's Gunner Gate, U.S. forces provide support

By Pfc. Edgar Reyes  
Staff Writer, Raider Review

**T**he 2nd Tank Battalion, 2nd Armor Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division is conducting gate and traffic operations at Gunner Gate on Camp Taji, Iraq, while being supervised by the 4th Battalion, 42nd Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Brigade Team, 4th Infantry Division.

The Iraqi units guarding Gunner Gate are on a ten-day rotation where they live, eat and sleep in industrial storage containers at the gate during their ten-day mission. There are 14 soldiers who rotate to different spots on the checkpoint every three to four-hours.

"Their task is to operate a tactical checkpoint," said Capt. Kevin Robinson, battery commander, Btry. A, 4th Bn., 42nd FA Regt. "They direct all incoming traffic and check vehicles and personnel on a list which



U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Edgar Reyes

**Iraqi soldiers from the 2nd Tank Bn., 2nd Armor Brigade, 9th IA Div. inspect vehicles entering Gunner Gate on Camp Taji, Iraq. While the Iraqis are the main effort for guarding the gate, American soldiers are in the back drop supervising and providing support.**

contains information on vehicles and people who have been involved in terrorist activity in the past."

On most days, there is an Iraqi soldier directing traffic while another

Iraqi soldier slows the traffic down and checks vehicles on his list. If the vehicle or the personnel look suspicious, then he proceeds to veer (go to page 9, Iraqis)

## Poison prevention March 19 through 25

(continued from page 5)  
each plant with this name.

Be prepared ahead of time, since poisonings can occur at any time of the day and night.

### Medications

Always read and follow the directions and warnings on the label before taking any medicine. Some medicines are dangerous

when mixed with alcohol. Be aware of potential drug interactions. Some medicines interact dangerously with food or other medicines and should be taken with food. Your doctor should be made aware of all medicines, prescription or over-the-counter, you are currently taking. Never take

medicines in the dark. Never throw pills in a trash can. Old and outdated medicines should be flushed down the toilet. Some medications can become dangerous or ineffective over time. Never share prescription medicines. Do not remove labels from old medication bottles and do not mix medications

together. Medicines should be taken by the person prescribed and for the reason prescribed. Make sure to ask your pharmacist to use child-resistant containers.

Remember they are called child-resistant not "child proof." They will not stop a child from opening a container.

# Straight Arrow Soldier takes first place in Taji Poetry Contest

By Capt. Douglas Wilbur  
4th Bn., 42nd FA Regt.

Pfc. Michael Lang from the Highlanders of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 4th Battalion, 42nd Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division displayed his artistic talent by taking first place in the Camp Taji, Iraq, Black Essence Liberal Arts Extravaganza Poetry Contest, Feb. 24.

This young artist competed against a host of very qualified amateur poets presenting their best works on stage in front of hundreds of people attending the Black Heritage Month event.

Other art forms such as paintings and drawings were also on display. All of the work demonstrated the great diversity and talent of the American Soldier.

The competition Lang faced was difficult, as the other competitors put on a good show presenting their intriguing and sometimes provocative poems, but Lang still came out on top.

Lang worked on the poem for four-months, as he states, "It started as a little something for my mom's birthday. Then it turned into so much more."

For his poetic efforts he was awarded \$200 and a special coin.

However, receiving accolades from his peers for his artistic work is what he cherished the most.



U.S. Army photo by Capt. Douglas Wilbur  
Pfc. Michael Lang won \$200 for winning a Taji poetry contest.



## 9th Iraqi Army Division pays visit to 1st BCT TOC

Soldiers from the 9th Iraqi Army Division were at the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division Tactical Operations Center March 1 to see how the 1st BCT is fighting the Global War on Terrorism. The Iraqi soldiers were also treated to a static display of Bradleys and tanks. To the left, an Iraqi officer explains to his soldiers the capabilities of the tanks as Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Wells looks on. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Brent Hunt)



# Estonian, U.S. troops working together to patrol Taji sector

By Pfc. Edgar Reyes  
Staff Writer, Raider Review

**A**s many Soldiers from Taji, Iraq, finish their shifts, Soldiers from the 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment and an Estonian light infantry platoon are but half way done with their 17 to 19 hour work day.

"I probably get six hours of interrupted sleep a day," said Spc. Gerek Syroka, light-wheel vehicle mechanic, Troop B, 7th Sqdn., 10th Cav. Regt., 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division. "If I'm not fixing or doing maintenance on a vehicle, pulling tower guard security, doing radio watch, or doing a dismounted patrol multiple times a day, I might get in maybe an hour of sleep with no interruptions."



U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Edgar Reyes

An Estonian light infantry platoon along with Soldiers from 7th Sqdn., 10th Cav. Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div. patrol a sector outside the gates of Camp Taji, Iraq on a four-day rotation.

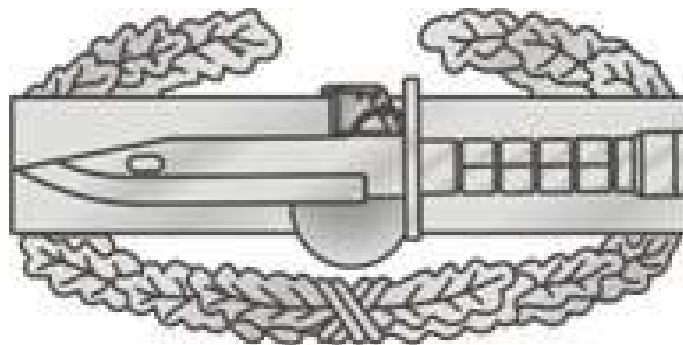
The troops force levels are stretched thin even with the help of

the Estonian light infantry platoon.  
(go to page 12, Fort)

## CABs awarded for contact with enemy

—(continued from page 3)  
the enemy. In keeping with the spirit of the Warrior Ethos, the CAB provides special recognition to Soldiers who have engaged the enemy.

The five Company B Soldiers receiving the CAB were Staff Sgt. James Rozell, Staff Sgt. James Newton, Spc. Robert Denker, Spc. Christopher Carson and Pfc. Andrew Mann. The sixth Soldier



from Headquarters and Headquarters Company was Pfc. Rahaun Crawford. "They really exemplify

the best of the STB, because they are all from different MOSs (military occupational specialty)

doing what the Army asks them to do in a superb manner," Cross said right before he pinned the Combat Action Badges on the Soldiers. After the CAB pinning ceremony, members of the 1st STB gathered around and congratulated the Soldiers on their well deserved awards.

Rozell said, "It's great that Soldiers are being recognized for their actions out there."



# Paladin providing 155mm rounds for Iraqi, U.S. forces

By Capt. Douglas Wilbur  
4th Bn., 42nd FA Regt.

**T**he Straight Arrows of 4th Battalion, 42nd Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division are always ready to deliver safe, timely and accurate 155mm fire missions in support of the Iraqi Security Forces and 1st BCT.

The Hot Platoon is composed of four M109A6 Paladin self-propelled howitzers, the most technologically advanced artillery piece in the world. The platoon is prepared 24-hours a day, seven-days a week to conduct multiple types of fire missions from counter fire to harassment and interdiction. The battalion has two firing batteries, the Aztecs of



U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Ross Salwolke

**A Paladin fires an illumination round at Camp Taji, Iraq, in support of a 1st Bn., 66th AR, 1st BCT mission recently.**

Battery A, and the Black Dragons of Battery B.

While only one platoon is hot at any one time, all four platoons take turns on the firing point. This allows all cannon crews to maintain their professional competence. The Hot Platoon is just another step the Straight Arrows take to ensure the protection of Camp Taji, Iraq, and the

success of the Iraqi Security Forces.

The Hot Platoon is always ready to fire a wide variety of fire missions with various types of ammunition. These fire missions can be both lethal with high explosive rounds known as HE, or precision munitions like Copperhead and SADARM that can destroy targets with

extreme precision.

They can also fire nonlethal illumination and smoke rounds to support maneuver forces, depending upon the effect the maneuver commander desires to accomplish. Furthermore, the Paladin can range targets outside the 1st BCT sector, enabling it to support adjacent Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces right from Camp Taji.

The Paladin crews of the Black Dragons are constantly conducting tough and realistic training, crew drills and dry fire missions to maintain their high level of professionalism. The Straight Arrows are no stranger to this type of training as providing fires is the key battle task for a field artillery battalion.

The Cannoneers of 4th Bn., 42nd FA Regt. are (go to page 13, 4-42) —

## Iraqis main effort at busy Camp Taji gate

— (continued from page 6) them off to a section on the checkpoint where they perform inspections.

The vehicles are searched for weapons and explosives and all personnel inside the vehicle are searched.

Overseeing the checkpoint are four U.S. Soldiers in a tower overlooking the Iraqi operations. On the ground are a couple of U.S. Soldiers providing guidance and assistance.

“Our guys are just there

to offer advice and support,” said Robinson. “In the event of an extreme attack, we have guys on the tower with a .50 caliber machine gun ready to give the Iraqi soldiers support.”

“One thing to remember is the Iraqi soldiers are

conducting their own operations,” said Sgt. Chad Charles, checkpoint non-commissioned officer, Btry. A, 4th Bn., 42nd FA Regt. “They select the vehicles they are going to search and they conduct their own search operations.”

# Iraqi, U.S. Soldiers working to provide secure environment

By Pfc. Edgar Reyes  
Staff Writer, *Raider Review*

**S**oldiers from 1st Battalion, 66th Armor Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division are assisting the Special Troops Company, 1st Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division in providing a safe and secure environment for locals in the Raider East area of operations.

The Iraqi army is in the led during the combined patrols, while U.S. troops are in the background providing supervision and support if they need it. The purpose of the patrols is to give the Iraqis experience, allow them to interact with the local community and eventually hand over the area to the Iraqis so they can provide their own security for their nation.

"We conduct presence patrols alongside the Iraqi army and the Iraqi police to deny anti-Iraqi forces sanctuary and prevent sectarian violence," said Capt. Jake Wamsley, Co. C, 1st Bn., 66th AR. "Training with the Iraqi army augments us in many aspects because they know the culture, language and area."

Joint patrols between the Iraqi army vary greatly depending on the situation at hand. Multiple patrols are sent out during the day, which can last up to 24-hours or less than six-hours. Soldiers go to local cities and talk to the local population to see if they feel secure and ask about their opinion on



U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Edgar Reyes

Pvt. Joshua Stein, with the grease gun, and Spc. Nathan Garza both Bradley drivers with Co. E, 1st Bn., 66th AR, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div. add grease to the track tension of a Bradley.

how the Iraqi army and Iraqi police are treating them.

"Doing dismounted patrols with the Iraqi army is the key to getting a working relationship with the people at the ground level," said Sgt. 1st Class Donald Locke, platoon sergeant, Company C, 1st Bn. 66th AR. "When the incident with the mosque surfaced, there were many threats made and numerous shootings took place in the surrounding cities. During that period, we went to every mosque, we talked to the people and told them to be patient and we went on extra patrols to provide the local people with an extra sense of security during an arduous time."

One unique advantage the STC has over other units from the 9th IA

Div. is their roster is comprised of people from the local towns instead of from all over Iraq like other units. People from the towns already know the personnel because they live in their town, which makes it easier for the Iraqi soldiers to remove insurgents because of the trust the people have for them and the willingness to cooperate with them.

"I think the Special Troops Company operates at a very professional and tactically proficient level," said Capt. Chad Caldwell, company commander, Co. E, 1st Bn., 66th AR. "The advantage is that they are Iraqi so they easily interface with the local population in this area. They are very proud in their mission to secure their own country."



# 2/9 Iraqi Army Div. surges to Baghdad to provide security

By Maj. David Olson  
*1st BCT PAO*

The early morning quiet was momentarily disturbed by the rumblings of tanks and armored personnel carriers as the 2nd Tank Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division surged south Feb. 27 to augment units of the 6th Iraqi Army Div. to provide a safe and secure environment for the citizens of Baghdad against terrorists.

Three companies from the 2nd Tank Bde., 9th IA Div. rolled south in Russian-built T-72 tanks and BMPs to provide heavy armor reinforcement to 1st and 3rd Brigades, 6th IA Div., who are maintaining the security in Baghdad during the media enhanced crisis of sectarian violence sparked by the Golden Shrine bombing in Samarra, Iraq.

"Terrorists blew up the mosque in an effort to get the Shiites and Sunnis to start a civil war," said Col. James Pasquarette, commander of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Div. "This is a very important time in Iraq's



U.S. Army photo by Maj. David Olson

**Three companies of BMPs and T-72 tanks from 2nd Tank Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division roll south to Baghdad Feb. 27 to provide security for the Iraqi people after the sectarian tension that stemmed from the Golden Shrine bombing in Samarra.**

history. We'll work together to fix this problem. I'm optimistic that if we work together we can get rid of some of the terrorists that live here."

Exercising incredible discipline, effective leadership and unit cohesion, the units from the 2nd Tank Bde., 9th IA Div. planned the movement, moved their armored vehicles 15-kilometers. and linked-up with their brothers from the 6th IA Div. within seven hours of receiving the mission.

By daylight, the armored vehicles had

repositioned throughout the city and began patrolling the streets of Baghdad to protect the Iraqi citizens.

The 2nd Tank Bde., 9th IA Div. was the logical choice to send for this mission, because they recently conducted a tank gunnery as the culminating event in their two-month training program. During the gunnery, the Iraqi Army fired its first tank rounds in 15-years.

Meanwhile, the efforts of the 9th IA Div. as they surged to provide a presence in their area of operation has maintained a

safe and secure environment for the Iraqi people.

The media predicted civil war has not happened, because these units have built relationships with the local population and has engaged their leadership to build a level of trust between citizens and Soldiers of different sects.

In addition, the civilian and religious leadership has called for unity, which has bonded the Iraqi people together as they strive to build a new government based on freedom and democracy.

# Fort Concho hosts combined troops

## ***Estonian Infantry soldiers make-up 34 member Camp Taji contingency in coalitions Global War on Terrorism***

*(continued from page 8)*

There are many different objectives that may be assigned throughout the day, but the three main tasks to be completed in their area of operations are guarding the compound, manning a checkpoint and patrolling the city multiple times throughout the day.

“We have to pull medics and mechanics from their duties to provide security for the compound and also the checkpoint,” said Capt. Ryan Long, company commander, Trp. B, 7th Sqdn., 10th Cav. Regt. “It puts a lot of stress and fatigue on the Soldiers which sometimes causes tempers to flare, but we have extremely disciplined Soldiers and extremely supportive non-commissioned officers, who at the end of the day help Soldiers place their frustrations and fatigue aside and help them complete their mission.”

During their long day of work, Soldiers are fed a concoction of food considered monotonous by some and delicious by others. The diverse cuisine offered at the Camp Taji dining facility is nowhere to be found at Fort Concho. Breakfast, lunch and dinner



*U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Edgar Reyes*

**An Estonian soldier patrols a city outside the gates of Camp Taji, Iraq, along with Soldiers from the 7th Sqdn., 10th Cav. Regt. The Estonian soldiers are a 34-member group consisting mostly of infantry soldiers who are part of the coalitions Global War on Terrorism. The soldiers go out on four-day patrols, come back to Camp Taji for 18 hours to recover and then are back out on patrol for another four-days.**

are comprised of minuet selections of apples and oranges, water and Gatorade and lots of meat. From burgers, steaks and ribs, Soldiers eat more meat than a lion in a closed cell with a herd of antelopes.

“Eating meat everyday gets old, so when I go back to I try to eat rice and lots of vegetables,” said Syroka.

Soldiers from Fort

Concho work a four-day rotating schedule, which consists of two-days of patrolling the streets of Saab Al Bour, one-day of compound security and one-day of rest and maintenance of vehicles.

“It is sometimes easier to work here, because when we go back to Camp Taji we work around 21 hours mainly performing maintenance on vehicles so that they are always ready

for the next mission,” said Syroka. “Every three days we have to bring food and fuel out to the compound so that takes up another part of our rest day.”

Like their American counterparts, Soldiers at Fort Concho are all about the mission and proving with good leadership and disciplined Soldiers anything is possible even if it means eating steak for every meal.



# 4-42 Artillery Soldiers keeping Taji safe

**'Safety is the most important part of the Field Artillery's work'**

(continued from page 9)  
masters of their trade proving their devastating effectiveness in numerous live fire exercises at Fort Hood, Texas, and at the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, Calif.

The constant practice on Camp Taji enables them to further hone the precise skills they have already attained.

Pfc. Brian Janosco from the Black Dragons says, "We train on the fundamentals of the Paladin, such as assembling the appropriate shell/fuze combination and laying the gun by compass or distant aiming point. Our training goal is a 30-45 second standard for fire missions."

While the Straight Arrow Soldiers enjoy all the tasks they perform to defend the camp, working in the Paladin is their favorite.

While the Paladins are the brawn of the field artillery, the battery Fire Direction Center is the brains. The FDC computes all of the technical firing data for the platoon, ensuring the rounds impact where they are supposed to... right on target.

The computation of firing data is not simple, and the Soldiers in the FDC train constantly on their



U.S. Army photo by Capt. Douglas Wilbur

From left, Staff Sgt. Salvador Miranda, Pfc. Lee Tuner and Spc. Paul Esparza all from 4th Bn. 42nd FA Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div. get ready to provide fire support inside a Paladin for Iraqi and 1st BCT missions. The field artillery battalion recently supported the Iraqi army and the 1st Bn., 66th AR, 1st BCT with illumination rounds during a combined mission.

sophisticated fire direction and communications equipment.

There is zero tolerance for computational errors, because the FDC crew never knows when it will have to fire missions close to friendly troops.

Safety is, of course, a primary concern for the gunners and they hold themselves to a very high standard.

Staff Sgt. Kevin Lawrence, a FDC section chief from the Black Dragons says, "Safety is the

most important part of the field artillery's work. Our fire power is extremely deadly and without thorough safety precautions, we could have casualties caused by friendly fire."

The coalition forces also take great precautions to avoid causing unintentional damage to innocent local Iraqis. The only people who feel the devastating effects of coalition fire power are the anti-Iraqi forces.

The Iraqi army

currently has no field artillery units, although they may field some in the future. In the meantime the Straight Arrow Hot Platoon stands by, ready to help our ISF comrades in arms and to accomplish their mission.

However, all the Hot Platoon Soldiers eagerly anticipate the day when the ISF will have their own field artillery battalions. Until that happens, the coalition stands, ready to provide safe, timely and accurate fires in operations against the AIF.

# Combined humanitarian efforts paying big benefits with local Iraqi population

(continued from page 1)

with each other (to) serve this nation,” Talb Fahad Awad, the owner of the train station commented. “We thank you. We are thankful for ... the medical treatment.

“Normally we have to get a (train) ticket to Baghdad,” Awad added. “In Baghdad, we get enough medicine for one week. We received more here.”

After the medical personnel set-up work stations inside the train station, a convoy of Humvees rolled up and down the roadways of the village announcing the event over a loud speaker using a taped invitation. Excited villagers walked to the train station where medical personnel remained busy seeing patients for two and a half hours.

About 100 local civilians showed up for free medical treatment. Three medical professionals saw the customers with the support of six medics.

“We saw between 90 and 100 patients today,” said Maj. El Castro, the 1st BCT surgeon. “The Iraqis provided a doctor and two medics and the Americans provided two primary care practitioners and four medics.” They treated a number of eye problems, respiratory infections,



U.S. Army photo by Maj. David Olson

**1st Lt. Saibatu Mansaray, a physician's assistant with Co. C, 4th Spt. Bn., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div. checks the throat of a local man at a combined medical operation with the 9th Iraqi Army Div. and the 1st BCT north of Baghdad, Feb. 23.**

skin problems, gastro intestinal problems, anemia and arthritis. In addition to treating the symptoms of ailing people, the medical personnel delivered new blankets, toys for the children and hope for the future of Iraq. And like the security situation, the future of a stable Iraq is secured by the professional conduct of the Iraqi soldiers from the 9th “hometown” Iraqi Army Div.

“We want to provide them with

support,” Castro said. “We can give back to the community.”

In this portion of Iraq, relationships are being built between the citizens and the Iraqi security forces. For the people of this little village, a glimpse of the prosperous future of Iraq emerged that will be a building block for what lies ahead as citizens and soldiers work together to provide a safe and secure for this glorious and great nation.

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